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Security Council

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Letter dated 28 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Russian Federation in March 2008 (see annex). The document was prepared under my responsibility, after consultation with the other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 28 May 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Russian Federation (March 2008)

Introduction

Under the presidency of the Russian Federation, the Security Council engaged in an extensive programme of work during the month of March. The Council held 16 meetings and consultations of the whole on 13 occasions. The Council adopted five resolutions and agreed on four statements to the press.

Africa

Peace and security in Africa

On 5 March, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerious, on Kenya. He described the development of the process of the political settlement by the parties in Kenya under the mediation of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities led by the former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. The Assistant Secretary-General emphasized that the Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government signed by the President, Mwai Kibaki, and the ODM leader, Raila Odinga, was the first step on the long way to lasting political settlement, including forming a new government and implementing constitutional reform. He reported that the ethnically motivated attacks in various regions of Kenya were continuing, emphasizing the need to address the problem of armed gangs. The Assistant Secretary-General described the humanitarian situation in Kenya as very volatile and stressed that the political process in Kenya needed to be further supported by the international community, including the United Nations and its Security Council.

The members of the Council welcomed the political accord signed by the parties in Kenya and commended the efforts of the Panel of Eminent African Personalities. The members of the Council called for the Agreement to be implemented by the parties in full and without delay. They expressed concern about the persisting violence in Kenya and the serious humanitarian situation in the country. The members of the Council reiterated the readiness of the Council to support the settlement of the crisis in Kenya and to closely monitor the development of the situation.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 31 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1807 (2008), by which it extended for a period ending on 31 December 2008 the arms embargo on all non-governmental entities and individuals operating in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and lifted the embargo previously imposed on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Guinea-Bissau

On 14 March, the President of the Security Council addressed a letter to the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, inviting the Chairperson of the country-specific configuration on Guinea-Bissau to brief the Council on 26 March.

On 25 March, the President of the Council received a letter from the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, informing him about the Commission's engagement with the country after its inclusion in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

On 26 March, the Council heard briefings by the Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Shola Omoregie, and the Chairperson of the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission on Guinea-Bissau, the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Ambassador Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti. Introducing the Secretary-General's report (S/2008/181), the representative of the Secretary-General informed the Council that the legislative elections were scheduled by the President of Guinea-Bissau for 16 November 2008 and underlined the importance of international assistance in the preparations for the elections. He welcomed the inclusion of Guinea-Bissau in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. He also stressed the importance of continuing collaboration between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and its regional and international partners in security sector reform, and the fight against drug-trafficking and terrorism. Ambassador Viotti informed the Council about the progress made by the Peacebuilding Commission in support for peacebuilding efforts in Guinea-Bissau, including advice on peacebuilding priorities in the country and work on the strategic framework for peacebuilding.

In consultations of the whole, the Council members underlined the progress made by the Government in cooperation with its partners to consolidate peace in the country, reform the security sector and fight against drug-trafficking and organized crime. They welcomed the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission with Guinea-Bissau and noted the need for sustained international assistance to achieve durable peace and stability.

Following consultations, the President of the Security Council issued a statement to the press.

Great Lakes region

On 13 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1804 (2008), by which it demanded that all members of FDLR, ex-FAR/Interahamwe and other Rwandan groups operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo immediately lay down their arms, and called upon the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda to intensify their cooperation to implement their commitments under the Nairobi communiqué.

On 26 March, in consultations of the whole, the Council heard a briefing by the Director of the Africa Division of the Department of Political Affairs, Joao Honwana, on the talks taking place in Juba, Southern Sudan, between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army. He highlighted the progress made by the parties of the Juba peace process to date and stressed that a unique opportunity had been created for the parties to sign the final peace agreement.

Somalia

On 5 March, in consultations of the whole, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs briefed the Council on the situation in Somalia.

During the discussion the members of the Council expressed their support for the activity of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, directed towards establishment of an inclusive political dialogue between the Transitional Federal Government and the leaders of the Somali opposition, with a view to stabilization of the situation in the country and consolidation of the national reconciliation process.

The Council expressed its intention to promptly consider the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General, including recommendations and options for the possible deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia.

On 20 March, at a debate followed by consultations of the whole, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Edmond Mulet, introduced the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/178) and briefed the Council members on the situation in Somalia and the contingency plans drawn up by the Secretariat for a possible deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia under four scenarios. The Permanent Representatives of Somalia and Uganda to the United Nations, Ambassadors Elmi Ahmed Duale and Francis K. Butagira, made statements.

On 31 March, the delegation of the United Kingdom organized an Arria formula meeting of the Council members with representatives of various non-governmental organizations to discuss the humanitarian and human rights situation in Somalia.

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

On 13 March, in consultations of the whole, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) (S/2008/145) and informed the Council of the process of temporary relocation of the personnel and equipment of UNMEE from Eritrea.

The members of the Council recognized the difficult burden that had been carried by the United Nations troops being relocated, and expressed their appreciation to the troop-contributing countries. They emphasized that the process was without prejudice to the Algiers Agreements and the decisions of the Council on the United Nations presence in the region.

The members of the Council insisted on the full cooperation of Eritrea in the context of the temporary relocation of personnel and equipment. The members of the Council looked forward to the upcoming report of the Secretary-General providing options and recommendations for a future United Nations presence in the area.

Sudan

On 11 March, the Council held a meeting to consider the reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations presented the report of the Secretary-General on the deployment of the

African Union — United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) (S/2008/98). In a detailed briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General reported the serious deterioration of the security situation in Western Darfur, following the offensive carried out by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) against the Sudanese Armed Forces and a large-scale responsive ground and air military campaign of the Sudanese Armed Forces aimed at reasserting control over the JEM and Sudan Liberation Army stronghold area in Western Darfur. He also reported that those hostilities had caused numerous deaths and tens of thousands of new displacements of civilians. He also emphasized that the tensions between Chad and the Sudan and fighting carried out by proxy rebel forces had the potential to regionalize the crisis and derail international peace efforts on both sides of the Chad-Sudan border.

The Assistant Secretary-General stressed that UNAMID continues to face difficulties in its efforts to reinforce the Mission, in security, in consistent level of cooperation with the Government, logistical constraints and force shortfalls.

On the same day the Council held consultations of the whole to discuss the item. Council members agreed on a statement to the press by the President reflecting the positions expressed in consultations. They expressed profound concern at the continuing complex security and humanitarian situation in Darfur and urged all Sudanese parties to observe the ceasefire, refrain from any hostilities and respect the norms of international humanitarian law. The members of the Council reiterated the need for the speediest possible deployment of UNAMID and urged all parties concerned to cooperate with the United Nations and the African Union to that end. The members of the Council looked forward to the success of the meeting between the Presidents of the Sudan and Chad in Dakar. The members once again underlined the vital importance of promoting the peace process in Darfur and supported efforts of the Special Envoys of the United Nations and the African Union aimed at ensuring the inclusive nature of this process. They recalled the respective obligations of the parties in Darfur in the context of negotiations.

Sudan: Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005)

On 13 March, in consultations of the whole, the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations, Ambassador Marcello Spatafora, made the periodic 90-day briefing on the activities of the Committee.

Asia and the Middle East

Afghanistan

On 12 March, the Council held an open debate on the situation in Afghanistan. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General on that issue (S/2008/159) and provided an assessment of the situation in the country.

The Under-Secretary-General stressed that the robust insurgency, still fragile Afghan governmental institutions and illegal drug economy posed the key challenges to the democratic development of Afghanistan. In this context he

outlined six areas of focus for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), emphasizing that, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report of 6 March, the current mandate of the mission was still appropriate to sufficiently fulfil its objectives.

Subsequently, the members of the Council negotiated a draft resolution on the basis of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, which was unanimously adopted on 20 March as resolution 1806 (2008).

In its resolution the Council recognized the continuing importance of fighting terrorist and narcotic threats, in particular posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other extremist groups, stressed the need for the continued engagement of the international community in Afghanistan, and extended the mandate of UNAMA, as defined in resolutions 1662 (2006) and 1746 (2007), for an additional period, terminating on 23 March 2009.

Iraq/Kuwait

On 26 March, the President of the Security Council sent the Council's reply to the Secretary-General concerning the financing of the activities of the High-level Coordinator for missing Kuwaitis and third-country citizens and missing Kuwaiti property.

It was agreed that the Council would earmark US$ 225,000 to finance the continuation of the activities of the new High-level Coordinator for a period of 12 months.

The Council also requested a comprehensive report in 12 months with an update on progress during that period, as well as an assessment of the progress that might be achieved, including the conditions that would be necessary and a timescale for completion of the mandate.

Lebanon

On 10 March, the Council held consultations on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), concerning Lebanon. The Council heard a briefing on the Secretary-General's last report on that issue from the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Lynn Pascoe. The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on the work being done by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Myanmar

On 18 March, the Council held a meeting on Myanmar to hear a briefing from the Secretary-General's Special Adviser, Ibrahim Gambari, on his visit to the country. He said that despite the lack of immediate tangible results his visit should be assessed within the broader context of "good offices" efforts over the past two years. The delegation of Myanmar participated in the debate. Following the meeting, the Council held consultations of the whole.

Nepal

On 27 March, in consultations of the whole, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Angela Kane, briefed the Council on the developments in Nepal

in the context of its preparations for the election of a Constituent Assembly on 10 April. She stated that there had been significant changes in Nepal to improve the prospect of a successful election. Nevertheless she highlighted some new challenges and difficulties in the context of the election campaign, including those related to violence by groups opposed to the election and violation of the electoral code of conduct.

At the end of the consultations, upon the agreement of the Council members, the President of the Security Council read a statement to the press, in which Council members welcomed the progress towards the Constituent Assembly election. They urged all Nepalese parties to create an atmosphere conducive to a successful election to be held in a free and fair manner and reiterated their full support for the United Nations Mission in Nepal.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 1 March, the Council members held on emergency meeting to discuss the situation in the Middle East, where the Israel Defense Forces had launched air and land attacks on targets in Gaza and Palestinian militants had fired dozens of rockets at targets in southern Israel, including the city of Ashkelon.

When speaking at the meeting the Secretary-General condemned the escalating violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel, which had claimed dozens of civilian lives.

Following the meeting, Ambassador Churkin, in his capacity as the Council's President, read out a summary of the discussion that had been agreed upon by all 15 members.

Voicing deep concern about the loss of civilian life and the escalation of violence in the region, the Council members called on all sides to respect their obligations under international law and to immediately cease all acts of violence. Those acts must not be allowed to deter the political process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority aimed at establishing two States — Israel and Palestine — living side by side in peace and security.

On 6 March, the Council held urgent consultations to discuss the terrorist attack in Jerusalem. Members of the Council condemned the shooting in the religious seminary, but failed to reach a consensus on a reaction concerning that terrible incident.

On 25 March, the Council held an open debate on the Middle East. When briefing the Council on that occasion, the Secretary-General said he was deeply concerned about the prospect of renewed violence in Gaza and southern Israel, and what that would mean both for the civilian population in the conflict zone and for the peace process.

He added that the peace process was too important to be allowed to lose momentum through inaction or indifference, or to be overwhelmed by violence.

The Council heard also a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. He regretted that, over the past month, continuing efforts to advance the political process were once again overshadowed by violence, high numbers of civilian casualties and the lack of concrete improvements on the ground. But he

added that the very fact that the political process between Israelis and Palestinians continued was extremely important.

The Under-Assistant Secretary-General also said that the international community and all regional parties should give strong support to efforts to bring about a cessation of violence in and around Gaza and a reopening of crossings, in an atmosphere where the security concerns of the Palestinians, Israel and Egypt were addressed.

On Lebanon, he said that the country continued to be in the grip of a deep political crisis. He stressed that the longer the stalemate continued, the greater the chance for the situation to deteriorate further, both politically and in terms of the security situation.

The members of the Council and representatives of the several countries that participated in the debate also presented their opinions on the current status of the Middle East peace process.

On 27 March, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, Nicolas Michel, briefed the Security Council on the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 1757 (2007) regarding the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

The members of the Council noted the substantial progress that had been achieved in that regard.

Following consultations, the President of the Security Council read out a statement to the press, encouraging the Secretary-General to continue taking steps and measures necessary to establish the Tribunal in a timely manner.

Non-proliferation (Iran)

On 3 March, during consultations, members of the Council discussed the issue of the format of the following formal meeting and agreed that the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran could make a statement before the Council vote on the draft resolution regarding non-proliferation contained in document S/2008/141, sponsored by France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

At the formal meeting representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, South Africa, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Viet Nam and Indonesia spoke before the vote.

The Council then, acting under Article 41 of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, voted on the draft resolution, which was adopted by 14 votes, with 1 abstention, as resolution 1803 (2008).

Following the vote, the representative of the United Kingdom read out a statement agreed by the Foreign Ministers of China, France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States as well as by the European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, aimed at resolving the Iranian nuclear problem solely by political and diplomatic means, on the basis of Article 41 of the Charter, and on bolstering IAEA activities in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The representatives of France, the United States, China, Costa Rica, Burkina Faso, Belgium, Panama, Croatia and the Russian Federation also made statements.

Europe

Resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999), 1244 (1999)

On 11 March, the Council held a meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 6 March 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Serbia to the United Nations (S/2008/162) to hear from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Vuk Jeremić. He stated that his Government would not use force or economic embargo, but would use all legal, diplomatic and political means to assert the core sovereign rights of the Republic of Serbia over the breakaway province of Kosovo and Metohija, and vowed that Belgrade would not accept the imposition of an outcome that fundamentally violated legitimate national interests. The Foreign Minister, calling for observance of resolution 1244 (1999) in full, assured the Council that Serbia would continue to comply with that resolution. He stressed that that was the only way to prevent a further deterioration of the situation on the ground and there must be no erosion of the mandate, clearly defined by the Security Council, of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Following the adjournment of that meeting, the Council continued its deliberations on this agenda item in consultations of the whole.

On 18 March, the Permanent Representative of Serbia transmitted a letter from the Foreign Minister of Serbia, Vuk Jeremić, to the President of the Security Council, informing him about the request of Serbia to the Secretary-General to order promptly an investigation into the events that had taken place in Kosovska Mitrovica on 17 March 2008, asking the Council to consider the situation as urgently as possible and assuring the Council that the Government of Serbia would take whatever action was necessary to restore a momentum for compromise in line with resolution 1244 (1999) and, being committed to good-faith negotiation, stood ready to be a constructive partner in the determination of Kosovo's future status.

Thematic issues

Non-proliferation

On 17 March, the Council heard a briefing by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Ambassador Johan C. Verbeke, on the activities of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1737 (2006). After the briefing, the representatives of the United States of America and Burkina Faso made statements.

Threats to international peace and security caused by the terrorist acts

On 19 March, the Council held an open debate on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts. The Council was briefed by the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Mike Smith. The Executive Director summarized proposals with regard to the Directorate's organization and methods of work that were set out in the revised organizational plan and assessed progress made in the fulfilment of the Directorate's mandate. The Council afterwards heard statements by the representatives of all 15 of its members, followed by the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Cuba, India,

the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Japan, Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group, Slovenia on behalf of the European Union, Spain, Turkey and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

On 20 March, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1805 (2008), by which it renewed the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate until 31 December 2010. The Council emphasized the importance of further efforts of the Directorate to support the Counter-Terrorism Committee in the fulfilment of its mandate, in particular by strengthening the role of the Directorate in facilitating technical assistance aimed at enhancing Member States' capacity to fully implement resolution 1373 (2001).